

Town of



AMHERST *Massachusetts*

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HALLOWEEN STORM RECAP: October 29 – November 7, 2011

Late last week forecasters predicted a serious Nor'easter for our area on Saturday, October 29. Heavy wet snow started in the afternoon and continued through to sunrise on the 30th. Amherst ended up with ten inches of heavy wet snow, widespread damage from fallen trees, blocked roads and ultimately a total power outage of all 10,300 Western Mass Electric Co. (WMECO) customers in Amherst. Similar damage was reported in many surrounding communities.

Amherst Fire/EMS, Police, and Public Works had increased staffing in anticipation of the storm.

Saturday, 10/29/11

- 7 pm – Increasing reports of tree limbs coming down on power lines are coming into Emergency Dispatch. Also reports of power outages and blocked roadways.
- 7:30 pm – Amherst Fire Chief/Emergency Manager activates the Town Emergency Operations Center and notifies Town Manager John Musante and Planning & Conservation Director Dave Ziomek. Amherst Police Chief Scott Livingstone, Chief Nelson, Ziomek report to the Dispatch Center and DPW Superintendent Mooring to DPW HQ.
- Responders answer continual calls for service, due to the ongoing devastation, throughout the night and early morning hours.

Sunday, 10/30/11

- 6:00 am – Town Emergency Management Team convenes at Police HQ (Town Manager, Police/Fire Chiefs, Conservation & Development Director, Health Director, IT Director, Facilities Director, DPW Superintendent, Elder Services). Situational assessments completed and community informational messages developed.
- 99% of Town without power. AFD, APD, DPW buildings are on generator power.
- Developed and implemented operational plans for next 24-hour period.
- Homeless shelter at First Baptist Church allowed to open two days earlier than planned.
- Advisories distributed on Red Cross Regional Shelter in Northampton via Reverse 911 call to residents; arrangements made to transport Amherst residents to the shelter.

Monday, 10/31/11

- 63% of Town is without power.
- Consistent contact established with WMECO. DPW contracts with Wagner Wood for assistance with tree debris removal.
- APD officers do initial assessment of damage and blocked roadways.
- AFD responds to house fire which is a directly storm related.

Tuesday, 11/1/11

- 38% of Town is without power.
- Partnership with WMECO improves. Representatives from Town and Schools attend Emergency Operations Center (EOC) meetings convened by Town Manager.
- AFD begins damage assessments, road closure surveys and well being checks.
- Warnings issued on safe heating and spoiled food practices.

Wednesday, 11/2/11

- 35% of Town without power.
- WMECO reports the arrival of 5 additional tree crews and 12 additional power line crews who have driven from New Orleans.
- AFD continuing to update damage assessments, road closures and well being checks.
- AFD responds to another structure fire that is directly storm related.
- Uptick in Carbon Monoxide poisoning cases. Four incidents in Amherst with no deaths. Four total deaths in the surrounding area.
- Town Emergency Management Team has met twice a day since Sunday.

Thursday, 11/3/11

- 28% of Town without power.
- DPW cleanup efforts are ongoing.
- Area assessments and well being checks updated. Informational handouts to residents.

Friday, 11/4/11

- <10% of Town without power.
- Cleanup ongoing.
- Area assessments ongoing.

Saturday, 11/5/11

- 5% of Town without power

Sunday, 11/6/11

- 2% of Town without power, roughly 200 customers.
- Rescheduled Halloween festivities are successful.

Monday, 11/7/11

- FEMA/MEMA/DOT Damage Assessment Teams arrive to survey damage.
- WMECO reports 2 customers are presently without power.

Email us your feedback on how the Town handled the storm at stormfeedback@amherstma.gov. If you still do not have power, please call WMECO Customer Service at 877-659-6326.

We in Town government share the frustration felt by those still without power and those who lost power. We extend our thanks to the many Amherst residents and businesses who have reached out to support those in need.